

For the Rev. Levi Hart.
1609/5212.
of Preston. No 71

Mr. ANDROS' SERMON

ON THE

Death of his Wife.

1609 / 5212.



A REFERENCE, NOT ONLY OF GOOD BUT OF THE EVIL
THAT BEFALLS US IN LIFE, TO THE HAND OF GOD,
AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF PIETY :

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED TO THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
I N
BERKLEY, SEPT. 30, 1798,

—◆◆◆◆—
By Thomas Andros.
—◆◆◆◆—

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

*It remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as
tho they had none.*

St. Paul.

PROVIDENCE :
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P R O E M.

NOT any conceived peculiar merit in the following discourse, has induced the Author to permit its appearing before the public ; he presumes, however, that his motives will meet the approbation of piety and humanity.—It will be to him a mean of perpetuating the memory of one, who stood high in his affection, and to whom he is under peculiar obligations of gratitude and esteem. It may, in a way suited to produce virtuous impressions, serve, at a future period to gratify his children, by leading them back to an acquaintance with her who gave them birth. To these therefore, his bereaved children ; to the surviving relatives of their deceased Parent ; to the Ladies, by whose generous subscription the expence of publication is defrayed ; to the people of his charge in general, as a grateful testimony of respect, this discourse is inscribed by their much obliged and devoted friend,

The A U T H O R.

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S E R M O N.

JOB i. 21.

*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;
blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

HOW oft do those plans to which men have recourse, in the pursuit of happiness, terminate in disappointment and sorrow.—This shews, how necessary it is that we should be directed by superior Wisdom, in order to the attainment of an object so interesting. Thanks be to God, we are not here left without an infallible guide. Religion furnishes us with all necessary instruction. This is the divine art of being virtuous and happy. But however well adapted any art be, to the attainment of its object, it is plain it will be of little use, except it be well understood, and rightly applied. In application to religion, too much stress cannot be laid upon this remark.—That can be of no advantage unless we imbibe its spirit and apply its maxims. If you inspect the character of the righteous, and find that religion has inspired them with animation and joy, in every situation of life; it is because in every situation they have regulated their temper and conduct by it. Our text presents to us a man overwhelmed with the unexpected and reiterated strokes of adversity. But even in this situation instead of vexation, rage and despair, we see him tranquil

quill and contented, rising superior to all his woe. But to what is this triumph to be attributed? How comes he, rather than others, to possess a mind serene and unbroken amidst the most cruel reverses? To the benign influences of religion, all the glory is to be given.—To him it was a divine art, which rightly understood and applied, enabled him in patience to possess his soul, and yielded motives of encouragement and support, of which the wicked in the day of calamity are utterly insusceptible. He considered, that under the administration of an infinitely perfect and all-ruling God, nothing could take place but by divine appointment: and that here, whether our situation was easy and cheerful, or embarrassed and distressing, we have nevertheless abundant ground to bless his holy name. Under the full impression of this great truth, while heaven and hell all attentive to the result of his trial, were listening to what might fall from his lips, he uttered these remarkable words.—“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.” Words which reflected the highest honor on the divine character and government, and at the same time, disappointed and confounded the enemy of all righteousness.

In the selection of this subject, you will perceive I am guided by that distressful providence under which God has now called me to suffer. But do not imagine, my brethren, that in suffering I conceive myself to stand alone, or that, to me only the text affords instruction. Nay, my own sorrows revive in my mind, with peculiar energy, those many distressing occasions in which I have sympathized with you. To no part of this assembly can I turn but my eye meets those who have had their hearts deeply penetrated with grief. Here is one in distress for a child, whose bones are deposited on a far distant shore,

shore, while intervening oceans roll between.—
 There is another who has but now bedewed with
 tears the urn of a virtuous wife. Here is a third
 just returned from following a lovely daughter to
 the grave. There is a fourth in tears for the loss of
 that son, on whom the hopes of declining age were
 suspended. Ah! and which of you all, my brethren,
 has not, as well as myself, been called to imitate
 the bright example with which our text presents
 us? Nor let us vainly imagine, that the waves of
 trouble are all passed by: Are we not still embarked
 on a tumultuous ocean? Do not new trials await
 us? In our families will not death yet find many
 victims? Come then, prompted by what we have
 already suffered, and by what we have every reason
 to expect is yet before us; come, let us imbibe the
 spirit, that we may in every trial adopt the language
 and enjoy the peace of this great and good man.—
 Like him let us train ourselves to adore the Sovereign
 of the Universe, not only in the reception of
 good, but in the reception of evil. “Blessed be the
 Name of the Lord.” This is a pious and devout
 ejaculation. It implies an high esteem and full approbation
 of the Divine Character; a cheerful submission to his
 authority, and acquiescence in all his counsels and
 dispensations; an ardent desire that in all events
 God might reign; that his will might be fulfilled;
 every tongue utter praise, and every knee bow to him.

THE text and occasion lead us to the discussion
 of two important points:

1. As a principle of piety and virtue it is highly necessary, that we should refer to the hand of God all the good, and all the evil that befalls us in life,
 “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.”

2. Under the various bereavements and distresses of life, to the upright and good, there is still abundant ground to bless the divine name.

THE least inspection of the scriptures will convince us that those good men, whose characters they record, were in the habit of ascribing, not only the good things they enjoyed, but the evils they suffered, to the hand of God. The character of the instrument by which they were afflicted, made no difference in this respect. The house where Job's children were feasting, was overturned by the rude blast of the tempest, and they were buried in its ruins. The fire of the Lord, or lightning blazing on the world below, consumed his sheep and the servants who tended them. The Sabeans, a band of impious marauders, fell upon his oxen and asses, while the Chaldeans, another clan of robbers, seized the camels, drove them off, and slew, with the sword, the servants who kept them. But without regard to the different nature and character of the instruments, Job, upon receiving the news, instantly refers all to the hand of the Almighty. Whether it was the tempest, or the lightning, or the violence of robbers; these were only instruments in the Divine Hand. It was the Lord who gave, and the Lord who had taken away. And this is the character of the pious in general. Overlooking second causes, they refer all to his agency, from whom alone these causes derive their energy; and it is highly important as a principle of piety and virtue, that they should do so.

As to a reference of all the good we receive, to the hand of the Almighty; to do this, not only in systematic reasoning, but in sentiment or feeling, is essential to the existence of piety. Without this what proof have we that God is love? No man hath seen

seen God at any time ; we cannot look into his heart, inspect his feelings, and so form a judgment of his moral character. It is the exhibition he makes of himself in his operations, laws and dispensations, by which we must judge.—By tracing up those streams of goodness, which flow around us to him as their source, we perceive that he is good. If in following these streams we stop short of him, or refer them to some other cause, or to no cause at all ; we then destroy the only medium by which we arrive to this conclusion. Where then are we landed but in atheism and darkness ?

WITHOUT a reference of all the propitious events of life to the kind intention of the Most High, we must be cut off from that sublime and refined satisfaction which the righteous enjoy, in contemplating him as the beneficent Father of the Universe. To trace the Deity under this character affords them a delightful employment. In glowing impressions they discover his goodness written on every surrounding object. To them the Deity is the life, the light, and the stability of the created system. They delight to address him as their Creator, Divine Benefactor, and Preserver ; to put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and to view him as

“That nameless HE, whose nod is nature’s birth,

“ And nature’s shield the shadow of his hand :

“ Her dissolution his suspended smile.”

Those meditations impart to the soul a dignity, moral purity, and refinement of joy, in comparison of which there is nothing in the minds of those who are unwilling to retain God in their knowledge, but mere darkness and brutism. They give to it a tincture of divinity, or inspire it with a desire to assimilate itself to the character and peerless grandeur of the object of them. To mention but one observation more ; how without a reference of the mercies

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of life to the beneficent hand of the Almighty, can we ever become the subjects of a lively gratitude for them? Can piety exist in an heart which remains cold and insensible of gratitude to our divine benefactor? But is it not inconsistent with the constitution of the human mind, that we should ever glow with gratitude to a being from whom we are not conscious of receiving any favour? As far as a person is insensible that every good thing he enjoys is the gift of his Maker, so far he is ungrateful to him. But ingratitude we know, and especially ingratitude to the author of our being, is the worst of crimes. From these considerations, we might reasonably expect, that in the word of God, such as do not consider him as the dispenser of every blessing, are marked with disgrace and infamy: and we no sooner open the sacred volume than we find this expectation realized. In the Prophet Isaiah, such are represented as more unthinking and stupid than brutes themselves. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider.

BUT it is not enough that we refer to the hand of the Almighty the good we receive, but the evil also. Without this, there will be no foundation for some of the most important christian graces. God himself considered the ancient Persian doctrine of ascribing only the blessings of life to his Providence, as subversive of true piety; and therefore says to Cyrus, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things."

PATIENCE and submission to the divine will, under misfortunes, are inculcated in the scriptures as important christian duties; but if the hand and council of God is not concerned in these misfortunes, what

what place is there for submission to him? And it is no less a part of piety to improve afflictions as instances of divine correction. But how can we do this unless we firmly believe it is our Maker who holds and applies the rod? If our sorrows are the result of mere accident or chance, or if they are inflicted upon us by weak or wicked agents, who act independently of the direction and counsel of God, it is absurd to consider them as a call from him to repentance, or to talk of submission to his will in them. To suppose the counsel of the Most High is not concerned in the evils that afflict mankind, is to deny his government of the world, in that very point where his honor is most concerned to conduct it with unerring wisdom. All the evil that takes place is an absolute loss, except it be overruled to answer some benevolent purpose; and there is no way to maintain the infinite moral perfection of the Deity, but to suppose he will thus overrule it. What an infinite reflection it is upon his character, to suppose he has formed the pestilence—kindled the volcano—winged the lightning—or turned wicked men and devils loose in the world; and that without so determining and controuling their operations, as to cause all their fury to eventuate in his glory, and the good of those who love him. Can he stand by as an indifferent spectator, and see ambition, treachery and cruelty fill all nations with wild uproar and misrule, and waft the groans of dying millions from pole to pole? But this reproach, boundless as it is, we cast upon him, if we deny that for wise and good ends he has appointed all the evils that take place; and that he is ever in his providence directing them to the accomplishment of these ends. To finish what we have to offer upon this article we shall only add a passage from an author of pre-eminent merit.*

“Such a reference of the distressful events of our
life

**Dr. Blair.*

life to the appointment of Heaven not only is a duty which piety requires ; but tends also to mitigate distress, and to suggest consolation. For to dwell as is too commonly done upon the instruments and subordinate means of our trouble, is frequently the cause of much grief and much sin. When we view our sufferings as proceeding merely from our fellow creatures, the part which they have acted in bringing them upon us is often more grating than the suffering itself. The unreasonableness, perhaps, of an enemy ; the treachery of a friend ; the ingratitude or insolence of one whom we had much obliged, add weight to a load laid upon us by means so provoking. The thoughts of their malignity, or of our own neglect in guarding against it, serve to poison the sore. Whereas if instead of looking to men, we beheld the cross as coming from God, these aggravating circumstances would affect us less ; we should feel no more than our proper burthen. We should submit to it patiently ; and many resources would open to us from thinking of the hand that lays it on. Had Job when despoiled of all his substance thought of nothing but the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who robbed him, with what violent passions would he have been transported ? Whereas considering them as rods and instruments only, in the divine hand, and receiving the correction as from the Almighty himself, the tumult of his mind subsided ; and with respectful composure he could say, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

UNDER the second branch of our subject, to which we now proceed, we are to shew, that in the various bereavements and distresses of life, there is, to the upright and good, still abundant ground to bless the name of the Lord. Here you will perceive a wide field opens to view ; but few of the observations

tions however, that here suggest themselves, can be admitted within the limits of our present discourse. Our divine Lord assured his disciples, that though he was about to leave them in a world of tribulation, yet he would not leave them comfortless. Of this promise he never has and never will be unmindful ; in the severest distresses he opens to the virtuous many sources of consolation, and affords them occasion to pour forth the most ardent praise.

I. **WHATEVER** be our individual distresses God is in them operating for the production of general good. The general good of the moral system is an object of immense importance. The advancement of this must afford peculiar pleasure to every benevolent mind. He is a perfectly wicked being who rejoices not in the general prosperity of God's kingdom ; but only in his own personal happiness. If the upright can but be convinced that from their personal sorrow God is educing general good, it must be a source of joy and praise ; but to educe good both from individual and social distresses God has given us reason to believe to be a part of his glorious character. From the midst of the most afflicting dangers and trials we sometimes see individuals emerging to distinguished honor and felicity. The display made of their characters and talents in perilous and trying situations, is that which introduces them to public notice, and lays the foundation for their future greatness ; yea, elevates them to posts of extensive usefulness, where they become benefactors to the human race. In the political convulsions that shake the nations of the earth, do we not oft see the yoke of oppression broken, and a long injured people rising to the highest rank of national independence and glory ? Do not these rays of light that sparkle around us in the midst of the darkest scenes, in some measure develope Heaven's plan,
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and lead us to conclude, that God, both in the public and private sorrows of men, is operating for the production of general good. The history of Joseph is a wonderful illustration of this idea.—In those very misfortunes which befell him, and the family to which this excellent man belonged, God was carrying on a plan of the most extensive mercy and beneficence to the human race. But if all our individual distresses are thus to issue in general good, who is so mean and selfish, as to say this affords him no consolation under them, nor any ground of praise.

2. **WHATEVER** reverses the upright and good may suffer as to their worldly fortune, yet one point is clear, and in this they may ever rejoice, and be ever employed in ascriptions of praise to heaven: Their eternal interest is secure. As to their future prospects, the pious have nothing to fear from calamity, because it cannot eventually hurt them. “Great peace (says inspiration) have all they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” But if this be a fact that our future eternal interest is in no danger from what we here suffer, as it is not if we remain faithful to the Redeemer in our trials, then the chief foundation of joy and praise remains unimpaired.—Instead, therefore, of despair, it becomes us in the severest troubles to exult with the Apostle, and like him to say, we are full of joy amidst all our tribulation.

3. **ANOTHER** reason why we should bless the divine name in all our misfortunes, is that in them we suffer far less than we deserve. If we may rely upon the justness of those maxims by which the degree of ill desert there is in sin is estimated, or if we admit those descriptions of the dreadfulfulness of the punishment of it in another world, given by our Saviour, to be true, we must be convinced that nothing which
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men can suffer on earth, is by any means commensurate to the evil they deserve. But if this be a reality that our afflictions even when worst are far less than what we deserve, who will not praise the Almighty for thus mixing mercy with judgment.

4. It is in general true, that under the troubles of this life, our situation is marked with distinguished goodness. If we compare our circumstances with those of others, we shall oft find, that we not only suffer less than we deserve, but much less than many others.—Their burdens will so much exceed ours, that we shall be ashamed to complain, or even to mention our sorrows in comparison with theirs. If men would think less of those who enjoy a greater degree of prosperity than themselves, and more of those who are borne down with the weight of greater calamity, it would tend to produce the most happy moral effect upon the mind ; they would find themselves constrained to adore their Maker for distinguishing goodness. They would instantly loose sight of their own sorrows, and find themselves absorbed in solicitude and pity for others. To give full effect to this argument, let me transport you in imagination to the cities of New-York and Philadelphia. Here in these fair capitals of America the pestilence rages in a degree scarcely paralleled by the plague in any part of the world. Not the sins of these cities in particular but the iniquities of our land in general, have provoked Almighty God to send forth the destroying Angel. That lewdness, pride, infidelity, profaneness, injustice, sneering contempt of all serious godliness, dissipation, luxury, and ingratitude to heaven, that pervade our land, have roused his just indignation : and what indelible scenes of distress do these cities now exhibit.—Sorrows like theirs no doubt are unknown to most of us ; their streets almost desolated of inhabitants, exhibit a more gloomy picture than

than the uncultivated regions of the wilderness—
 “Here (as one describes their situation) parents, children, husbands, wives, brothers and sisters are suddenly torn from the feeling bosoms of their relatives, while the mourning survivors, are themselves momentarily expecting the solemn call. The lisping infant calling for its dead parents, and none but strangers to afford relief—houses totally emptied of their inhabitants, and the citizens flying in every direction from the infected places, as from a conflagrated town, or falling tower. The constant hearse in sable melancholy, conveying the victims of this desolating calamity to their last remove; whole families totally cut off, without a single domestic left to see them decently interred; reports say that in one instance, a man and his wife were found dead, with a surviving babe at the dead mother’s breast; in another the whole family were lying corpses, except a little child almost famished, calling for bread. These are but some faint outlines of the distresses of these unhappy sufferers.” In comparison with them, does not distinguishing goodness, in our situation though distressed, demand a tribute of praise. Forgetful of our lighter sorrows, let the charity of the whole union rouse all her efforts to alleviate misery so extensive and complicated.

5. THE effect which it frequently gives to moral instruction, is another ground of praise in adversity.—Wisdom, or divine truth, so impressed upon the mind as to produce virtuous affections, and govern our practice, is a pearl of incalculable worth. This is spiritual good, and no earthly good is too great to be exchanged for it; nor is any suffering too severe not to be endured in the pursuit of it; its price is above rubies: but adversity is the best school to assist us in acquiring it.

“Grief!

*"Grief! (says the poet) more proficients in thy school
are made
Than genius or proud learning e'er could boast."*

They are incorrigible indeed whom adversity will not mend. When all other means had been used in vain, for the reformation of Israel, God represents himself as taking encouragement that affliction would succeed. "I will go and return to my place, 'till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Thus we see the proposition made good, that amidst all our misfortunes there is much ground for gratitude and praise.

Now, my friends, let me solicit your indulgence and candor, while as an improvement of this subject, I point out a number of instructions which my late distressing bereavement has afforded me. You who have passed thro a similar scene of trouble, will permit me to say I have given a great price for wisdom. And praise be to divine mercy; I hope I have not suffered all this in vain.—I do not mean to suggest that I have discovered any new truths, but some articles which I heretofore admitted, have occurred to my mind with peculiar emphasis. The propriety of mentioning these on this occasion, will not be questioned, when it is considered that you, no less than myself are interested in them; and that they are those very principles which it is my official duty always to recommend to your regard.

1. THIS afflictive event has lead me to a more lively view of our ignorance of the ways of God. — Human calculation would have concluded in favor of the continuance of my consort, to blest with maternal tenderness and care, her numerous family. In the midst of life and usefulness, in the midst of all those tender charities which render the domestic

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circle a scene of felicity she has fallen; while many others totally debilitated by age and infirmity, and incapable either of usefulness or enjoyment are spared. Surely, in such an event, human wisdom is utterly confounded. But let not the least suspicion steal into our hearts, that the Judge of all the earth does not, even here, do right.—There is a veil, it is true, cast over his conduct in such scenes: clouds and darkness are round about him. But this obscurity arises not from any want of wisdom and benevolence in the divine administration; but from our feeble comprehension. He hides himself from us because his ways are above us; our capacities cannot grasp his infinite plan. Could we penetrate the veil, could we follow the Deity thro all the mysterious round, we should perceive his counsels to shine most where now most perplexed. We should find that he is hid from us only thro “excessive splendor,” or “thro lustre lost.” Let us then for the present be contented with our ignorance of the designs of heaven, and console ourselves that there is a time coming when the good shall be capable of knowing, and when it will be suitable to admit them to know more of the mysteries of Providence. “What I do now, thou knowest not, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

2. ANOTHER reflection which has occurred with peculiar emphasis is, how unable are we to guess aright concerning the unforeseen events of life, and how much unnecessary trouble we give ourselves concerning things that are never to take place. That shock of adversity under which my family now suffers is what I had little calculated upon. I did, indeed know that my departed friend was mortal, and that life in its very best estate is but a vapor, ready every moment to vanish. But then I acted upon it as almost a certainty, that she would be

be bereaved of me, and not I of her. This conclusion I thought was in some measure justified by those impairments which were long ago made in my constitution. But how false were my calculations ! How unfounded all those anticipations of sorrows wherein I seemed to see her a disconsolate widow overwhelmed with the care of a numerous family. Thus is imagination the source of a great part of human woe. We give to our own airy dreams the power of reality, and are thus at great pains to torment ourselves, when a smiling Providence calls us to rejoice. But what has now happened to me, has no doubt often happened to others ; just so unfounded have been their conclusions as to what was concealed within the impenetrable veil of possible events. Let this operate to suppress all unreasonable solicitude about futurity : Let us fulfil the duty and enjoy the good of the moment, leaving it to him whose right it is to rule, to vary the scenes of our life as he pleases. We have nothing to fear : "Take no thought for to-morrow" was our Saviour's direction ; and surely it is a wise one expressive of high regard to our duty and happiness. It requires us to leave the management of future events to him, who is able to give them a right direction, and not to disturb our present peace about things that may never occur, or if they do, God will in the event provide for us in ways which at present we cannot comprehend.

2. THE importance of religion as opening to the afflicted sources of encouragement and consolation, has appeared in a striking light. In all ages religion has been the refuge of the afflicted. Without the strength and comfort resulting from her principles and promises, there are many unfortunate situations where nothing presents itself as a security from vexation and utter despair. "Trouble and anguish

guish, saith the Psalmist, have taken hold on me ; yet thy commandments are my delight." Again, " Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction." Strip the mind of the good man of those reasons for patience and resignation which religion suggests ; divest him of those hopes, those animating prospects, which she presents to him in a brighter world, and you render his misery complete. In this view, the cruelty of infidel philosophy appears in the most deformed colours. What would you think of his inhumanity, who should pursue the unfortunate mariner, and thrust from under him the little plank on which all his hopes of reaching the shore depended ; and who, having thus extinguished the last ray of light that beamed upon his soul, could boast of it as a glorious achievement ? But this is thy character O infidelity ! Had it been in thy power, thou wouldst have, now in my misfortune, stripped me of all the consolations which religion affords ; and when thus with the cruelty of a devil, thou hadst plunged me in despair, thou wouldst have abandoned me without offering one rational motive of comfort. The hydras and furies of antient fable are faint images of thy loathed form, and thy superlative malice. Let them know (says the celebrated Dr. Beattie, speaking of Sceptics and Deists) that in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart, pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair ; and do they with sacriligious hands attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny. Does not the influence of your tenets deepen the

the gloom of human distress, and aggravate the horrors of the grave? Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts? Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished forever, if this consideration does not awaken in you the keenest remorse.

4. To have our friends continued within the reach of prayer; and to have opportunity to confer with them on the interesting concerns of a future life, has impressed my mind as a privilege of eminent worth. While my consort was conflicting with the disease which put a period to her life, I found a mitigation of my distress and a source of comfort in committing her case to the Father of Mercies, and pleading in her behalf. Though I enjoyed it, yet I did not realize how great a privilege this was. But no sooner had she expired than I was made sensible of it. Overwhelmed with the sorrows of this event, I called my family together; and how was my soul afflicted, when I found I was not now permitted to offer a single petition for her; that her state was fixed to all perpetuity, and that whether happy or miserable, I must never request the least alteration in it.— Submission was now the only duty; and thus it must be with you my friends; soon very soon, all those whom you love will be placed beyond the reach of your prayers or instructions. Improve then this precious privilege while it lasts. Does not the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avail much? You know not what blessings your devotions may bring down upon those for whom you ought to pray. Carry then your wives, your children, your country, the church of God, yea all whom you ought to mention, continually on your hearts to the Throne of Grace. Be diligent in instructing those whom God has specially committed to your care.— If you fail in this point, what a subject of lively regret

gret will it be when they are parted from you; and the opportunity for the discharge of these duties is gone forever.

5. I have been made to feel what power there is in the sympathy and compassion of our fellow men to sooth the afflicted heart. In the present state it is the lot of man to encounter many distresses. This is the wise appointment of heaven. They cannot be avoided; but the divine benevolence is manifested in providing many causes of mitigation, even in regard to those distresses from which he will not exempt us. But is there any thing, aside from the presence of God, and the consolations of religion, that has a greater power to alleviate human grief than the compassion of our brethren, expressed in proper ways. This is the reason why we are commanded to weep with those that weep. One honest tear shed over the unfortunate, is pouring oil and wine into the wounds under which they bleed. Even pecuniary assistance administered with an unfeeling heart and mein, is oft a less favor than the mingling tears of a generous pity. In this respect my circumstances have been peculiarly fortunate. Placed in the midst of a generous, humane and compassionate people, pity has exhausted all her efforts to console my loss. My obligations to you my friends, are greater, far greater than I can express. Accept, I beseech you, my sincerest acknowledgements for all the compassion and kindness, which, unsolicited you have expressed towards my afflicted family. Could your prayers, or could your tears have averted the ruthless shaft of death, my departed friend had still survived. Too strong also is the impulse, not to mention with lively sentiments of gratitude, the tender and affecting part which many others in the neighbouring towns have taken in my affliction. While I feel oppressed with a sense of unworthiness
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of such distinguished favors, it heightens my uneasy sensations to reflect that I am incapable of rendering either you or them any adequate return. But here I find consolation ; true benevolence is not mercenary. It does not give hoping to receive as much again. Your humanity and pity carries in it its own reward. If you but know you have wiped away one tear from the eye of pining grief, you are satisfied : besides Jesus is able to reward you.—It is his gospel which prompts your benevolent exertions, and calls forth your pity. If so, he will never forget your labor of love. Thro eternal ages you shall reap the fruits of his compassion to a dying world. And to add my best and most fervent prayer, may he at last gather you into that generous and happy throng, to whom he will say, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom of heaven prepared for you from the foundation of world.”

6. I have only to add, that my mind has, in a more lively manner than usual, been impressed with the unutterable importance of every one being in a state of actual preparation for death. O death how serious is the hour of thy approach ! How shall we need the presence of God to support us when contending with this last enemy ! If in those deep sighs, those hollow groans, those convulsions, of dissolving nature, that rend the heart of surrounding friends, you breath away your soul in despair, and under the wrath of God, how deplorable will be your case ! No wonder Moses, who had a view of the weight of this subject, and felt how important it was to all the living, thus exclaimed : O that they were wise ! that they understood this ! that they would consider their latter end ! My dear friends, let me intreat you to avoid every species of conduct, that can have an influence to thicken the gloom of a dying hour. Embrace that Almighty Saviour, who only is able to
carry

carry you triumphant through this awful scene. Remember that the sting of death is sin ; every transgression therefore is adding pungency to this sting and malignity to its poison. Mark the upright man, and imitate his example ; for be assured only his end is peace.

A M E N.

FINIS.

AN EXTRACT

From Mr. SMITH's SERMON, delivered at the Funeral of Mrs. ANDROS, Sept. 20, A. D. 1798, characteristic of the Deceased.

BY the attention of her parents she had received a decent and virtuous education; and had demeaned herself with propriety in every relation from her youth.

She was naturally amiable, and had become much more so by her virtues.

Her uncommon industry, domestic economy and prudence;—

Her filial respect, her endearing love to her most affectionate friend and companion and her tender care of her children;—

Her meekness and quietness of spirit under injuries; her humility, acquiescence and resignation under trials;

Her firm belief of the Christian religion, and veneration for the word and worship of God;

Her gratitude to her benefactors, regard to this Christian

Christian society, love to her neighbours, and benevolence to all mankind;

Witnessed that she had been with Jesus, and was truly his disciple.

If our deceased friend may not justly be numbered with the excellent of the earth, we know not in this day where to find them.

On the whole she has left behind her the best grounds of consolation for her much afflicted, surviving friends; for such has been her conduct in every situation of life, as to justify our applying to them these soothing words of the Apostle: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope; for if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

